

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 PM-05 ISO-00 ACDA-12 SMS-01 HA-05
SES-02 CIAE-00 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 TRSE-00 EB-08 OMB-01
COME-00 /105 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/NE:REWOODS:CW
APPROVED BY EUR:GSVEST
EUR/NE:RLFUNSETH
EUR/SOV:SMCCALL
DESIRED DISTRIBUTION
PM, EUR, ACDA, NEA, T
-----119131 171532Z /46
R 170008Z AUG 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
SECDEF WASHDC 1017

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 208599

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PEPR, NL, UR, IR

SUBJECT: VEST/TYDEMAN CONVERSATION: US/SOVIET RELATIONS
AND DUTCH FRIGATES TO IRAN

1. DUTCH CHARGE TYDEMAN ACCOMPANIED BY POLITICAL OFFICER
VOS CALLED ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY VEST AUGUST 15 TO
REVIEW STATE OF US/SOVIET RELATIONS. VEST ALSO RAISED
DUTCH, US, IRANIAN CONSULTATIONS ON FRIGATE SALE,
SCHEDULED FOR NEXT WEEK IN WASHINGTON.

2. TYDEMAN DESCRIBED THE CURRENT PHASE OF DUTCH-SOVIET
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RELATIONS AS ONE OF "PAUSE AND REFLECTION," FOLLOWING
TENSIONS RAISED BY THE DISSIDENT TRIALS. HOW THIS WOULD
DEVELOP OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS WAS A QUESTION, AND
THE DUTCH WANTED OUR ASSESSMENT OF US/SOVIET RELATIONS
IN THE NEAR TERM.
3. VEST REPLIED THAT OUR RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS

HAD BEEN PRICKLY FOLLOWING THE DISSIDENT TRIALS, THE CRAWFORD CASE AND SOVIET ACTIONS AGAINST US CORRESPONDENTS. WE ARE CURRENTLY AT A STAGE OF ACTION AND RESPONSE AND RELATIONS COULD EITHER IMPROVE OR DETERIORATE. THE ADMINISTRATION HAD SOUGHT TO BALANCE ITS REACTION. WE HAD STRONGLY DEPLORED SOVIET ACTIONS WITH REGARD TO

THE DISSIDENTS AS INCONSISTENT WITH THE HELSINKI DOCUMENT. WE WOULD CONTINUE TO OBJECT TO ANY SUCH FUTURE ACTIONS. AT THE SAME TIME, SECRETARY VANCE HAD MADE CLEAR THAT WE DID NOT WANT TO LAUNCH A TRADE WAR AND CUT THE TYPES OF TIES WHICH WE AND OTHERS IN THE WEST FOUND USEFUL. WE HAD REFUSED TO SELL A COMPUTER TO TASS, BECAUSE OF THE SOPHISTICATION OF THE TECHNOLOGY INVOLVED AND ALSO AS A POLITICAL SIGNAL. SOVIET PUBLIC REACTION SHOWED THEY HAD CAUGHT THE SIGNAL. WE WERE, HOWEVER, GOING AHEAD WITH OTHER SALES AND IN OTHER FIELDS. ARMS CONTROL -- SALT, CTB, CAT -- WAS ONE OF THESE OF GREAT INTEREST TO US AND THE SOVIETS, WHERE WE WERE MOVING AHEAD. ON THE QUESTION OF OUR OVERALL RELATIONS, THESE DEPENDED TO A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE ON FUTURE SOVIET ACTIONS. SHOULD THEIR APPROACH BE HARSH OR INFLAMMATORY, OUR OWN ATTITUDE COULD ALSO COOL.

4. TYDEMAN STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSULTATIONS
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WITHIN THE ALLIANCE ON HOW TO APPROACH THE SOVIETS, AND MADE SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO OUR DECISION ON THE COMPUTER FOR TASS. VEST FULLY EMBRACED THE PRINCIPLE OF CONSULTATION AMONG THE ALLIES, WITHOUT COMMENT ON OUR HANDLING OF THIS SPECIFIC CASE.

5. VEST ALSO RAISED A TELEPHONE CALL HE HAD EARLIER RECEIVED FROM ALLARD STIKKER, PRESIDENT OF RYR-SCHELDE-VEROLINE, THE SHIPYARD BUILDING THE FRIGATES FOR IRAN. STIKKER, WHO IS COMING TO WASHINGTON FOR US/IRANIAN/DUTCH TALKS AUGUST 21-25 ON THE FRIGATE SALE, WAS CONCERNED OVER POSSIBLE US PRESSURE TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL US COMPONENTRY. HIS SPECIFIC CONCERN WAS OVER THE PHILLIPS DATA CONTROL SYSTEM AND QUESTIONS WHICH HAD BEEN RAISED FIRST BY US OFFICIALS AND MORE RECENTLY BY THE IRANIANS ON ITS INTEROPERABILITY WITH US SYSTEMS ALREADY IN THE IRANIAN INVENTORY. VEST REPLIED THAT WE UNDERSTOOD THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS QUESTION TO THE NETHERLANDS, WERE DEEPLY COMMITTED TO THE TWO-WAY STREET, AND THAT THE US GOVERNMENT WOULD APPROACH THE QUESTION ON PURELY TECHNOLOGICAL GROUNDS WITHOUT ANY TILTING TO US COMMERCIAL INTERESTS.

6. TYDEMAN SAID THE DATA CONTROL SYSTEM QUESTION HAD CAUSED SERIOUS IRRITATION IN DUTCH TECHNICAL AND POLITICAL CIRCLES. THE SYSTEM HAS BEEN DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY TO BE INTEROPERABLE IN A NATO CONTEXT, AND IF IT WAS INTEROPERABLE WITH US SYSTEMS IN THE ENGLISH CHANNEL IT WOULD ALSO BE IN THE PERSIAN GULF. VEST

COMMENTED THAT THIS BROADER NATO CONSIDERATION MADE IT ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT THAT ANY PROBLEM IN INTEROPERABILITY BE IDENTIFIED NOW. VANCE

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ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /013 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:EUR/NE:WNEWLIN

APPROVED BY:EUR/NE:REWOODS

-----081681 230941Z /21

R 230506Z AUG 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 208599

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 208599 ACTION BRUSSELS INFO TEHRAN MOSCOW AND SECDEF WASHDC DATED AUG 17, 1978.

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 208599

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PEPR, NL, UR, IR

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2. TYDEMAN DESCRIBED THE CURRENT PHASE OF DUTCH-SOVIET RELATIONS AS ONE OF "PAUSE AND REFLECTION," FOLLOWING TENSIONS RAISED BY THE DISSIDENT TRIALS. HOW THIS WOULD DEVELOP OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS WAS A QUESTION, AND THE DUTCH WANTED OUR ASSESSMENT OF US/SOVIET RELATIONS
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4. TYDEMAN STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSULTATIONS WITHIN THE ALLIANCE ON HOW TO APPROACH THE SOVIETS, AND MADE SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO OUR DECISION ON THE COMPUTER FOR TASS. VEST FULLY EMBRACED THE PRINCIPLE OF CONSULTATION AMONG THE ALLIES, WITHOUT COMMENT ON OUR
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COMMENTED THAT THIS BROADER NATO CONSIDERATION MADE IT ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT THAT ANY PROBLEM IN INTEROPERABILITY BE IDENTIFIED NOW. VANCE UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

NOTE: ORIGINAL DISTRIBUTION: EUR/NEA,POLI,TRSE,OMB,EB,COME, ACDA,SMS,HA,SES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, SALES, CARGO SHIPS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE208599
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: REWOODS:CW
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780336-0772
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780853/aaaabseb.tel
Line Count: 250
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1f9ffc61-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 19 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1708412
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VEST/TYDEMAN CONVERSATION: US/SOVIET RELATIONS AND DUTCH FRIGATES TO IRAN
TAGS: PEPR, NL, UR, IR
To: BRUSSELS
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1f9ffc61-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014